

## Message Text

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47

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CINCLANT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 1351

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI AO

SUBJECT: POLITICO -MILITARY SITUATION: PORTUGAL PREPARED TO  
PASS JURISDICTION TO THE UN

1. SINCE I SENT THE SHORT TERM MILITARY ASSESSMENT ON AUGUST 25 (LUANDA 1247), THE MPLA HAS CONTINUED TO GAIN GROUND. THEY HAVE TAKEN CAXITO, FENDED OFF UNITA ATTACKS IN THE CENTER AND SOUTH AND DRIVEN FNLA NORTHWARD FROM THE KEY ROAD JUNCTION AT LUCALA. NEVERTHELESS, MPLA BELIEVES IT IS TOO THINLY STRETCHED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND WANTS TO BE ABLE TO BRING GREATER FIRE TO BEAR AGAINST THE FNLA NORTH AND EAST OF LUANDA. FOR THIS REASON IT HAS SOUGHT NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITA TO OBTAIN A CEASE-FIRE IN THE SOUTH. UNITA, ALTHOUGH IN A WEAK POSITION SEEMS TO HAVE FOUND A SPONSOR AND, REALIZING WHAT MPLA IS AFTER, HAS TAKEN A BELLIGERENT STANCE. FNLA CONTINUES TO BUILD UP A LOGISTICAL BASE IN THE NORTH IN PREPARATION FOR A MOVE TO INVEST LUANDA AND CUT MPLA OFF FROM ITS WINTERLAND. THE PORTUGUESE ARE PROMPTING AN MPLA/UNITA AXIS BECAUSE THEY SEE IT AS THE  
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ONLY MEANS OF TRANSFERRING SOVEREIGNTY ON NOVEMBER 11. IN THE

ABSENCE OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT, PORTUGAL WILL GIVE JURISDICTION TO THE UN.

2. NOW THAT MPLA HAS GAINED CONTROL OVER MUCH OF THE COUNTRY, THE LEADERSHIP HAS STARTED THINKING IN TERMS OF HOW TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POSITION AND PREVENT ANY LOSS OF GROUND. INTERNALLY, THE PARTY LEADERS ARE MAKING ANOTHER EFFORT TO BRING THE ACTIVE REVOLT FACTION INTO THE MAINSTREAM. AGOSTINHO NETO NEEDS THE TALENTS REPRESENTED IN THE ACTIVE REVOLT AND ALSO WANTS TO BE ABLE TO END FACTIONALISM BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. THE ACTIVE REVOLT, FOR ITS PART, RECOGNIZES THE STRENGTH OF NETO AND MAY NOW BE WILLING TO COME TO TERMS. STILL, THE OLD POSITIONS REMAIN, IF IN A MODIFIED FORM. NETO HAS OFFERED THEM JOBS IN THE GOVERNMENT - AN UPDATED VERSION OF HIS ARGUMENT THAT THEY MUST COME IN AS INDIVIDUALS. THEY HAVE DECLINED AND SAY THEY WILL ENTER AS A GROUP AT THE BOTTOM AND EARN THEIR PROMOTIONS THROUGH HARD WORK AND DEDICATION - A VARIATION ON THEIR CONTENTION THAT THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO COME IN AS A GROUP WITH THE RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE LEADERSHIP. NETO WANTS THEM, BUT AS THEY HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN AND AS THE MPLA LOOKS AS THOUGH IT WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL POWER ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE LEFT BEHIND.

3. MPLA'S EFFORTS TO COME TO TERMS WITH UNITA STEM FROM THE REALIZATION THAT THE PORTUGUESE ARE PREPARED TO TURN POWER OVER TO A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY AND FROM THE NEED TO FREE UP FORCES FOR AN ATTACK ON FNLA. THEY ARE CONFIDENT THEY CAN DO THE JOB IF THEY BRING ALL THEIR FIREPOWER TO BEAR AGAINST THE NORTH. IF THEY CAN NEUTRALIZE UNITA NOW THEY CAN MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO ELIMINATE THE FNLA. MPLA MADE A SERIOUS STRATEGIC MISTAKE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WHEN IT DID NOT ESTABLISH A DEFENSIVE LINE AT THE LIFUNE RIVER, NORTH OF CAXITO. WHEN THEY GET UP TO LIFUNE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DEFEND QUITE EASILY AGAINST AN FNLA OVERLAND THRUST. ALTHOUGH THE RECAPTURE OF CAXITO REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY, MPLA MUST NOW MOVE FNLA FURTHER BACK AND EVENTUALLY DRIVE IT OUT OF ANGOLA IF THE COUNTRY IS NOT TO BE PARTITIONED. TWO PRINCIPAL GOALS OF THE MPLA ARE THE OIL FIELDS AROUND SAN ANTONIO DO ZAIRE AND CARMONA. WITHOUT THESE FNLA IS REDUCED ONCE AGAIN TO A GUERRILLA FORCE.

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4. THE ROAD EASTWARD FROM LUANDA IS VITAL TO MPLA NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN THE INTERIOR, BUT ALSO AS A MEANS OF MOVING SUPPLIES AND TROOPS WHERE NEEDED. THE FORMER PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE BASE AT SAURIMO (HENRIQUE DE CARVALHO) IS NOW IN MPLA HANDS AND REPRESENTS A MEANS OF GETTING ARMS INTO THE COUNTRY. IF THE FNLA COULD DRIVE MPLA WEST OF DONDO, FNLA AND UNITA COULD HOOK UP TO THEIR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE AND MPLA WOULD BE CUT OFF FROM A REGION ESSENTIAL TO ITS CONTINUED

HEGEMONY OVER THE INTERIOR.

5. THE MPLA STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO UNITA IS TO KEEP UP THE MILITARY PRESSURE WHILE HOLDING OUT THE PROSPECT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, THE NEGOTIATING SESSIONS AT LISBON A FEW DAYS AGO BETWEEN THE MPLA AND UNITA CONSISTED LARGELY OF MPLA ULTIMATUMS - EITHER UNITA ACCEPT MPLA TERMS, OR ELSE. ABSENT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH UNITA, MPLA PROBABLY WILL SQUEEZE UNITA UNTIL LITTLE MORE THAN NOVA LISBOA REMAINS IN SAVIMBI'S HANDS. AS I UNDERSTAND THE STRATEGY, THEY WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO TAKE NOVA LISBOA BECAUSE OF THE THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES THERE AND THE CRITICISM THAT WOULD BE DIRECTED AT THEM IF THEY ATTACKED WHAT HAS BECOME, IN EFFECT, AN OPEN CITY. TWO KEY POINTS COME IMMEDIATELY TO MIND IF ONE THINKS IN TERMS OF AN MPLA SQUEEZE ON UNITA: ALTO HAMA, WHICH LIES NORTH OF NOVA LISBOA AND IS A KEY CROSSROADS THE POSSESSION OF WHICH WOULD PROVIDE CONTROL OVER MOVEMENT IN THE CENTER OF THE COUNTRY, AND GIVE MPLA CONTROL OVER THE IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL AREA AROUND CELA (SANTA COMBA). ANOTHER CRUCIAL POINT IS MARIANO MACHADO WEST OF NOVA LISBOA.

6. UNITA APPARENTLY BELIEVES IT HOLDS A FEW CARDS, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT MPLA IS SEEKING AN UNDERSTANDING, BUT SAVIMBI MUST NOT ONLY HOLD OFF MPLA, HE MUST DRIVE THEM BACK AND REGAIN LOBITO IF HIS ZONE OF INFLUENCE STRATEGY IS TO HAVE A CHANCE OF SUCCESS. WITHOUT ACCESS TO FUEL AND OTHER SUPPLIES HE MUST SOON CAPITULATE. HE SAYS HE HATES MPLA; AT THE SAME TIME HE HAS NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FNLA. IN FACT, THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF HATRED BETWEEN MNLA AND UNITA, ESPECIALLY AMONG RANK AND FILE UNITA ELEMENTS. SAVIMBI STILL LOOKS UPON HIMSELF AS THE SWING MAN WHO CAN, THROUGH HIS INDEPENDENT STANCE WIELD CONSIDERABLE POWER, OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, INFLUENCE WITH BOTH MPLA AND FNLA. HIS OPTIONS NOW ARE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED AND HE IS GOING TO HAVE

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TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE MPLA UNLESS HE CAN PULL OFF A MILITARY MIRACLE, AN UNLIKELY PROSPECT. HE PROBABLY WILL SEEK A FORMULA THAT WILL ALLOW HIM TO SAVE FACE, BUT MPLA WILL ONLY BE SATISFIED WITH A SOLUTION THAT EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALIZES HIS MILITARY FORCES.

7. THE PORTUGUESE AIM IN THIS STILL UNFOLDING TRAGEDY IS TO GET OUT; WITH HONOR, IF POSSIBLE, BUT TO GET OUT ON NOVEMBER 11. FNLA NO LONGER FIGURES IN PORTUGUESE PLANNING; THE IDEA IS TO INDUCE MPLA AND UNITA TO COOPERATE SO THAT A LEGAL FICTION CAN BE ESTABLISHED, NAMELY THAT TWO THIRDS OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT ARE IN PLACE AND THAT HENCE THE PORTUGUESE HAVE A LEGALLY CONSTITUTED MAJORITY OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT TO WHICH IT CAN TRANSFER POWER ON INDEPENDENCE DAY. THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO RULE HERE ARE NOT ANTI-FNLA; THEY JUST DO NOT SEE THAT FNLA HAS ANYTHING TO OFFER THE COUNTRY - NOT CAPABLE

LEADERSHIP - NOT A PROGRAM FOR GOVERNING AND NOT A LARGE POPULATION BASE. MPLA HAS ALL THREE, WHILE UNITA HAS SOME INTELLIGENT LEADERS, A MODERATE PROGRAM AND A LARGE BASE. IF AN IMPASSE HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN MPLA AND FNLA, THEY REASON, AND IF MPLA AND UNITA TOGETHER REPRESENT, OR CLAIM TO REPRESENT, EIGHTY TO NINETY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, AND IF THE PORTUGUESE ARE DESPERATE TO GET OUT OF HERE, THEN FNLA IS GOING TO HAVE TO FEND FOR ITSELF.

8. IF UNITA WILL NOT COME TO TERMS WITH THE MPLA BEFORE NOVEMBER 11, AND CANNOT BE MILITARILY DEFEATED BY THAT TIME, THE PORTUGUESE WILL HAVE THREE OPTIONS: 1) TURN THE COUNTRY OVER TO THE MPLA; 2) POSTPONE INDEPENDENCE; 3) PUT THE ENTIRE MATTER INTO THE HANDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THE PORTUGUESE WILL NOT POSTPONE INDEPENDENCE, NOR WILL THEY TURN THE COUNTRY OVER ONLY TO THE MPLA. HENCE, THE ULTIMATE FALLBACK POSITION FOR THE PORTUGUESE ON NOVEMBER 11 (OR NOVEMBER 10) IS TO DROP ANGOLA INTO THE LAP OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

9. THE NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER, ADMIRAL CARDOSO, TOLD ME ON SEPTEMBER 10 THAT THE GOP STILL HOPES TO INDUCE UNITA TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE MPLA BEFORE INDEPENDENCE DAY. HOPE IS FADING, HE SAID, BUT IT IS THE LAST CHANCE FOR A SOLUTION NOT INVOLVING THE UN. CARDOSO SAID THAT HE TOLD AGOSTINHO NETO ON SEPTEMBER 8 THAT THE OAU RECTGNIZES ALL THREE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND THAT THE PORTUGUESE CAN DO NO LESS. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD FOLLOW  
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A RIGIDLY NON-PARTISAN COURSE DURING THE REMAINING WEEKS OF THE TRANSITION. NETO REPLIED THAT MPLA CANNOT AND WILL NOT HAVE ANY DEALINGS WITH THE FNLA. AT THE SAME TIME, HE EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR CARDOSO'S POSITION.

10. CARDOSO SAID THE GOP HAS ALREADY STARTED GETTING THE UN INVOLVED. LETTERS HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL POINTING OUT THE WORSENING NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE IN ANGOLA. HE SAID THAT IF YOU RATED UN INVOLVEMENT ON SCALE OF TEN, IT NOW STOOD AT ABOUT FOUR. IF BY NOVEMBER 10 MPLA AND UNITA HAVE NOT AGREED TO COOPERATE, PORTUGAL WILL FORMALLY GIVE THE UN JURISDICTION OVER ANGOLA.  
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